

Wakefield Launches New Park Tuesday

An overflow crowd is expected for Wakefield's home opener against Falls Church tomorrow, when the Warriors will make their first appearance in their revamped park as a Group One team.

Since the local public last saw the Warriors, everything has changed. When last viewed before a home crowd, Wakefield was Group Two. The ball park was as good as they come around here, but that, of course, was nothing to brag about.

But now there's plenty to brag about. Wakefield has one of the

best ball parks in Northern Virginia now. There's a complete fence surrounding the field. There's a new electric scoreboard, compliments of the Pepsi Cola outfit.

Everything that doesn't grow or walk has been painted. A public address system will be in use. Programs will be available. Instead of all fans crowding through one gate behind left field, tickets will be on sale at the gate located on George Mason Drive as well.

Several town dignitaries will be on hand for the occasion. Doug Wallop, author of "The Year The Yankees Lost The Pennant" will throw out the first ball in the new park. Wallop's books was later made into the stage play "Damn Yankees."

Paul Ronka, the lad who started on the mound for Wakefield in the lid-lifter with George Mason

has been chosen as the starting pitcher against Falls Church.

The day's program will actually get under way at 1:30 p.m. for all early comers, although the game doesn't start until shortly after Wallop tosses out the ball at 3 p.m.

Wakefield's batting practice starts at 1:30. Falls Church will take its swings at 2 p.m. and complete infield drills at 2:40. At that time, Wakefield starts infield drills.

At 2:50, the coaches, captains and umpires hold the required discussion on ground rules. Five minutes later, the two teams will line up down the base lines, and the band will march into center field. The National Anthem will be played, then the first ball will be retrieved by some lucky player.

This ceremonious occasion is something the Warriors have been working for since last November when they started promoting movies, bake sales and dances, in order to raise funds to improve their park.

This past week has been a rat-race against time as the players struggled in the rain to finish the park in time for today's opener. In addition to all the work, the Warriors had to allow time for practice between hammering fences and painting bleachers.